

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

January 12-13, 2007

"A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife"

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

ACHIEVE HEALTHY, DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTING HABITATS

Multi-Agency Watershed Group Birch Bay Project: The Multi-Agency Watershed Group (MAWG) gave an introductory presentation of various watershed process and habitat suitability and connectivity characterization tools to local stakeholders. Agencies participating in the MAWG include Ecology, Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Puget Sound Action Team, Community Trade and Economic Development, Environmental Protection Agency, and WDFW. The Birch Bay Project, taken on in partnership with Whatcom County, will apply the Ecology, WSDOT, and WDFW landscape characterizations to the Birch Bay watershed in support of local stormwater planning and shorelines management initiatives. County officials were very pleased with the outcome of the workshop.

Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued a new 50-year license to the Chelan County Public Utility District. It contains some of the provisos and requirements for protection, mitigation, and enhancement that were included in a multi-party settlement agreement that was submitted to the FERC three years ago. The Region Two Director asked Major Projects staff to identify: (1) specific changes from the settlement agreement; (2) activities where WDFW has a role or responsibility; (3) the nature of each identified role or responsibility; (4) timeline(s) associated with each WDFW role/action; and (5) which Regional staff person should be responsible for an action and also who should be involved or consulted. When we move into the implementation of protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures contained in the new license, the Regional Director indicated his desire that Major Projects staff be the lead WDFW representative in the several forums involved (e.g., Chelan River Fish Forum, Lake Chelan Fish Forum, Wildlife Forum, and Recreation Forum).

Little Klickitat River Short-Plat Application: For the first time, Klickitat County has agreed to condition a short-plat application to require a 200' buffer on a Type-1 water, the Little Klickitat River. The 200' buffer is the maximum allowed under the county's critical areas ordinance. Previously, the County only followed their shorelines buffer requirement, which is 100 feet. Part of the condition imposed by the County was if the landowner desired to reduce the buffer width he would have to work it out with WDFW. We have been contacted and a date set to meet in the field with the landowner representative.

Makah Bay Offshore Wave Energy Pilot Project: The first license application in the United States for a wave energy project has been accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. While this and other wave energy projects have gone through the preliminary permit process, this is the first project to submit an application for a license. The application contains over 1,300 pages of material. The project will be located 3.7 miles offshore and will include four generating buoys and a transmission line. It will generate one megawatt of electricity. The applicant is requesting that the project area be closed to fishing in order to protect their anchoring system, which will occupy an area 625 feet by 450 feet. We have until February 16, 2007 to review the application materials and develop our comments, terms, and conditions for the project.

Sunset Falls Fishway: The seasonal operations of the trap and haul fishway at Sunset Falls came to a close on December 15, 2006. This facility provides anadromous salmonid access to approximately 98 miles of habitat in the South Fork Skykomish River watershed. Operations at the fishway were plagued with low flows through much of the season, and this was followed by a major flood event on November 6, 2006. The flood effectively halted operations for two weeks as construction crews scrambled to restore key components to the facility. The Sunset Falls fishway has been seasonally operated since 1958 and provides (on an average year) 23,000 adult salmon, steelhead, and a small number of cutthroat trout and native char access to over 100 miles of spawning and rearing habitat. Unfortunately, only 10,398 salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout and char were trapped and hauled above Sunset Falls this year. This number represents the lowest number of fish trapped and hauled in recent years.

Bear Creek Culvert Replacement Projects: As part of the Habitat Program (Habitat/TAPPS Division) effort to correct fish passage barriers and noncompliant diversion screens on WDFW-owned lands, CP&E construction crews have been working on the Methow Wildlife Area in Okanogan County to replace fish passage barrier culverts scheduled for correction during the 2006 construction season. WDFW crews were ordered to evacuate the wildlife area due to the Tripod fire during July, August and most of September 2006, after completing two culvert replacement projects. Culvert replacement work resumed in late September and October, and two additional projects were completed. Both barrier removal projects were located on Bear Creek, which flows through the Methow Wildlife Area before entering the Methow River near the town of Winthrop. Currently, Bear Creek is entirely diverted into an irrigation canal downstream of the wildlife area, and this blocks anadromous fish use. Passage barrier removal projects will continue in 2007.



Bear Creek, Lester RD Before Replacement



Bear Creek, Lester RD After Replacement

Land Exchange: Staff convened a District Team meeting to review exchange parcels between Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Blixeth. The group looked at parcel location in relation to existing public ownership and reviewed PHS data to see what resources were inventoried on various parcels. A memo of the district team's findings will be written for the Wildlife Program regarding parcels of concern. Overall, Region 3 is very pleased and supportive with the parcels DNR will pickup in this process, eliminating the checkerboard ownership pattern in some important areas and eliminating the threat of development.

Fish Passage Barrier Removed: Staff continues to support Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program efforts by providing technical and permitting support for screening, passage and habitat projects. A major project was completed last month on South Fork Cowlitz Creek. The passage barrier at the upper Lust gravity irrigation diversion was removed. Removing this barrier provides passage into 20+ miles of spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish and resident fish species.

Flooding: Much of the Area Habitat Biologist staff work has been driven by responses to flooding events that occurred in the Yakima Basin on November 9 and 10, 2006. Flooding in the Upper Yakima was of a substantial magnitude, though of relatively short duration and was attenuated in the mainstem Yakima and Cle Elum Rivers by the Bureau of Reclamation storage dams. Areas that were problematic in the 1990 Thanksgiving flood were again subject to damage in this event. The Salmon la Sac road above Lake Cle Elum was washed out, damage was noted in Sun Island subdivision along the Yakima River, and there was extensive flooding at Elk Meadows subdivision. There was considerable erosion and lateral bank scour in the Middle Fork Teanaway River. The fish passage reconstruction project on Cold Creek by the Bureau of Reclamation (mitigation for Keechelus Dam work) was totally destroyed, within days of project completion. Staff provided design assistance and issued emergency HPAs for bank stabilization work in Silver Creek and the Yakima River near Easton, and the Middle Fork Teanaway, as well as for relocating woody debris in the Yakima River. Staff has also reviewed sites of concern with the respective landowners at other locations on the Teanaway and Naches Rivers.

Flooding Events on the Cowlitz River: On November 6-8, 2006 Packwood was hit with record flooding: Two lives and several houses were lost at the east end of Lewis County. Some houses that were not lost are now vulnerable at the next high water event. Many residents are very concerned about the dramatic changes in the Cowlitz River. Some of the "fixes" that various community members proposed included damming the historic channels, dredging the old channels, salvage logging the LWM (large woody material) from river bars and hardening the banks. Based on the opinions of a multi-agency intra-disciplinary team, these proposals could make the problem much more dangerous.

The Muddy Fork of the Cowlitz avulsed and reactivated a historic channel on the alluvial fan immediately upstream of the High Valley and Timberline developments. Both developments are within a channel migration zone. The High Valley Community is concerned about the abundance of LWM on the newly created gravel bar and the potential for the new channel to cause further avulsion and damage.

On the opposite bank from High Valley is Timberline. On this side of the river some of the residents are concerned about the reactivation of a historic side channel that has more flow than in previous years.

On November 29 and 31, 2006 WDFW staff, a DOE hydrologist, and consulting geo-fluvial-morphologists flew and ground-truthed observations made in the reach. Based on those observations it was found that the avulsion of the Muddy Fork reduced the number of drainages feeding that stretch of the Cowlitz River by 1/3. This is good news for the residents of Timberline because the volume of water available to cause damage is less than in previous years. The proposal to dike off the newly reactivated channel was determined to be undesirable because it would deflect the flow to High Valley and contribute to more erosion and threaten structures on the opposite bank.

The reactivated channel of the Muddy Fork is now more linear with respect to the river and valley that will help reduce the potential for erosion on the residence of High Valley. It was determined the proposal to block the newly reactivated channel and restore the old channel by dredging would increase flow velocity to the Timberline Community (which is on an outside bend). This would result in loss of more houses and it would hit the High Valley community more perpendicularly as opposed to the post-flood situation of the main-stem running parallel to the shoreline.

Removal of the LWM has become contentious. The Habitat Biologist has received calls from environmental interests opposed to removing the wood and loggers interested in salvaging it. In an effort to find some balance, the Habitat Biologist contacted a fish enhancement group and asked them to consider using some of the wood that is not currently contributing to gravel bar stability for fish habitat projects. It is important that “key pieces” of LWM not be removed because they are keeping the new gravel bar in place and protecting the landowners. The gravel bar pushed the river to the center of the valley and away from the shore where it could threaten homes or infrastructure. WDFW was working closely with the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group (LCFEG) to issue a permit to create a LWM bank. The LCFEG decided it was too expensive. The Commissioner-elect subsequently wrote a pointed letter to the Habitat Biologist but no alternative proposals to remove what some perceive as excess LWM without destabilizing the gravel bar has been made. Although there is a socio-political perception that the LWM is a threat to public safety, the hydro-physical opinion of the intra-disciplinary team is that the wood does not pose a threat to safety and the removal of the wrong pieces could destabilize the bank and cause loss of more houses or infrastructure. This debate will probably escalate in the political arena.

Mosquito Control Permit – Methoprene: IRM initiated a meeting with Department of Ecology and the Wildlife Program regarding the draft revision of the mosquito control permit. We advised Ecology of our need to continue to have restrictions on the use of Methoprene in areas where sensitive state listed species are present (e.g., northern leopard frog populations on WDFW lands in Grant County). Methoprene use has, in some studies, been implicated in the decline of amphibian populations. The pesticide use industry is opposed to even limited restrictions, apparently because of the precedent that it might set for use in other states.

Bighorn Sheep Attracted to Road De-icer: Biologists from Yakama Indian Nation and WDFW, along with the general public, have recently observed herds of bighorn sheep at several locations on SR12 and SR821 licking de-icer on the roads. There was concern for public safety and whether the de-icer is toxic to wildlife. In some cases sheep were actually blocking traffic. The Maintenance & Operations Superintendent for Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) indicated that DOT and the rest of Washington State are now using a performance enhancing anti-icer / de-icer additive. The additive that makes it less corrosive than salt is a concentrate derived from corn and is specifically engineered to enhance the effectiveness and viscosity. In addition to enhancing performance, the concentrate, mixed with magnesium, sodium and calcium chloride brines is more than 70% less corrosive than rock salt with a eutectic temperature of -10F. The supervisor indicates that DOT has been using this salt chemical now for four years, and their data shows no increase in road kill from previous years when just sand was used. This de-icer product is composed primarily of materials from the processing of salts and sugars, making it economical and readily available. It is nontoxic and non-hazardous to plant and animal life and the environment, and is also biodegradable. Region 3 will be monitoring this issue to assess if these are isolated incidents or if there is a chronic problem and collaborate with DOT as needed.

HPA Meetings With USFS & USFWS and Proponent of Rimrock Motocross Event: Staff organized collaborative meetings between WDFW, USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and USFS (U.S. Forest Service) to review the annual Rimrock Motocross Race monitoring efforts from this year's event. This race is held annually in the bed of Rimrock Reservoir after it has been drawn down for irrigation use. Prior to WDFW involvement, the race was routed through streams, riparian areas, and within bull trout and Kokanee spawning reaches. WDFW and the USFS have required permits and monitoring of this event over the past several years to prevent impacts to fish and wildlife habitat during the event. Riding within wetted streams and riparian vegetation is not permitted. WDFW and USFWS conducted detailed pre-race, race-day, and post-race monitoring of stream conditions, bull trout spawning status, ORV use, and adherence to HPA provisions. We have employed "adaptive management" technique and have fostered a good working relationship with the motorcycle club. A larger concern around the bull trout/Kokanee spawning streams is unregulated public ORV use during non-race weekends.

SeaDoc Grant for Pinto Abalone Pilot Outplant Study: Pinto abalone have experienced dramatic population declines in Washington state in spite of a recreational fishery closure in 1994, and may be functionally extirpated in some areas. Surveys from 1992 through 2006 have documented an 80% decline in relative pinto abalone abundance. Remaining densities at ten study sites have fallen below levels needed for successful reproduction and recruitment. Individual sizes indicate an "aging" population and recruitment failure. The SeaDoc Society has awarded an enhanced grant to the University of Washington and WDFW to continue work on abalone genetics and to conduct intensive pathological screening to certify hatchery reared juvenile abalone as disease-free as a precursor to out planting hatchery bred juveniles in a initial phase of an abalone recovery effort. Studies of growth, survival, maturity rates and genetic profiles will continue the evaluation process.

Removal of Derelict Gillnet Near Purdy: On November 29, 2006 the department received multiple phone calls regarding a seal or sea lion in derelict gillnet near the Purdy Spit. According to the caller, the net had captured either a harbor seal or a sea lion that was still alive. In addition to our department, National Marine Fisheries Service, the local fire department and media were contacted. Thanks for speedy responses from agency staff, we were able to respond quickly and determined that there was no net off Purdy Spit with any marine mammal entangled. There was no net in the area, however several sea lions were in the area and were extending their flippers into the air, which is a normal sea lion “rafting” behavior. Following confirmation that no pinnipeds were entangled at the Purdy Spit, a derelict net full of debris was found just north of Minter Creek. The derelict net was removed later that day.

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery: In March 2007, staff is planning the first initial release of pygmy rabbits from captivity to the wild. The first release site is the Sagebrush Flats Wildlife Area, the last area known to have supported pygmy rabbits. We estimate between 25 and 35 rabbits will be released, with final numbers to be determined in late January or early February. Pygmy rabbit genetics will be comprised of approximately 75 percent Columbia Basin and 25 percent Idaho stock. Monitoring will be conducted in conjunction with a Ph.D. student at Washington State University under the direction of Dr. Rod Sayler, who has been involved in pygmy rabbit recovery for a number of years.

WDFW Region 2 staff members are working with ten landowners on safe harbor agreements at present, and things are going smoothly. It appears that most landowners contacted have been interested in safe harbor agreements. Private land surveys are in step with safe harbor work. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed the internal review process and has approved reintroduction. However, they are still working on the draft federal recovery plan and biological assessment for safe harbor permits. They hope to have both of these products in January.

Sage grouse: As of December 2006, two of 25 females from the 2004 translocation, 6 of 21 females from the 2005 translocation, and 6 of 15 females from the 2006 translocation were still being monitored. Translocations in 2004 and 2005 were conducted in March during the breeding season. The translocation in 2006 targeted the late summer brood rearing period. A comparison of translocations from these two distinct life history periods has not been conducted before for sage-grouse. Also the inclusion of juvenile sage-grouse in the 2006 translocation will provide important information related to this cohort’s ability to survive translocation. So far mortality has been highest for juveniles. Only 3 of the 11 juveniles translocated were still alive in December compared to 1 of 2 adults and 2 of 2 yearlings. Movements of translocated sage-grouse have been largely on the Yakima Training Center site, but in the last three years a number of individuals have been relocated off the installation. Of particular note, one female successfully reared a brood in 2006 on WDFW’s Wenas Wildlife Area, approximately 34 kilometers west of her release site at the Yakima Training Center.

Elk Captures: During a continuous 10-day elk capture effort from December 12 through December 21, 2006, the Yakima Elk Study capture team darted and handled 117 adult cow elk in support of the Yakima Elk Study objectives. Many of these captures represented recaptures of radio-collared elk that have been monitored for at least a year and, for some elk, as many as four years. Some of the elk recently captured were new to the study. Thirty-two elk were free-wintering elk that were helicopter darted in three major wintering areas. Eighty-five were ground darted across nine elk winterfeeding sites in the Yakima Elk Herd area. The capture was lead by Deer and Elk Specialist Dr. Scott McCorquodale and WDFW Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield. Additional team members consisted of Region 3 Wildlife Area staff (Cindi Confer, Jody Taylor, Wayne Hunt, John McGowan, Bruce Berry, and Casey Kass), WDFW District Biological staff (Jeff Bernatowicz and William Moore), retired WDFW Veterinarian Dr. Briggs Hall, several U.S. Forest Service biologists, and a few volunteers. The team successfully retrieved all GPS collars that had been deployed last winter, which was an important objective. Captured elk were all sampled for pregnancy, lactation status, body fat and mass, and selected diseases. The elk were then tagged if they were not already marked. No elk died during the actual capture and handling process, but there were two post-capture elk mortalities.

Committee Holds First Advisory Meeting: Region Four's Enforcement Captain attended the introductory meeting of the Enforcement Advisory Committee at the Hyak in Snoqualmie Pass on December 2, 2006. The Enforcement Chiefs and problem wildlife manager were also in attendance. Members of the committee have very diverse backgrounds; all have one thing in common – a strong interest in conservation law enforcement. We expect good things to come from this group.

WINTER CONDITIONS

REGION 1

Winter Weather Conditions (Northeast): Conditions are relatively normal, although much more difficult than a year ago. The rain in Spokane fell as snow to the north. Sherman Creek Wildlife Area has about eleven inches at its headquarters. Chewelah has only about six inches, but snow is now crusted. Turkey and other upland birds are challenged to find foraging areas, and are evident along valley roadways and farm/residential yards. Deer and elk are scrounging for hay where they can find it, so they are visible and will likely draw attention from the public.

REGION 2

Scotch Creek Wildlife Area (1800 feet)

Weather: Snow depth is above the average, as compared to the past ten years, and is currently standing at twenty inches.

Temperature: Highs are in the upper 20's, with lows in the lower teens. The snow is not crusted.

Mortality: No mortalities have been documented or reported at this time.

Animal Concentrations: Very few deer are present this year. Staff drove through some good winter range along Salmon Creek, Scotch Creek, the Riverside cutoff, Pogue Mountain, and Tunk Valley, and observed three deer. In years past, staff has counted over 100 deer (in milder winters) wintering on Scotch Creek.

Public Concerns: No public concerns have been reported at this point.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

Weather: Approximately ten inches of snow accumulated on the north end of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area, and approximately twenty inches accumulated in the south end near Fish Lake. Temperatures for the week ranged from ten to thirty-six degrees. The mule deer and whitetail deer observed appeared to be in good condition and did not appear to be hindered by accumulated snow. Staff has not received any comments or complaints from the public regarding feeding deer.

Wells Wildlife Area

Weather: Temperatures turned colder earlier than usual this year (high winds at times), with early snowfall as well. Snow depth varies from four to six inches at the 1,000-foot level to twelve inches at the 2,500-foot level. Deer concentrations are normal and the deer appear to be in good physical condition. Staff has not received any reports of public concern for the deer.

Okanogan

Weather: Several large storms have resulted in above average snow depths in both the Okanogan and Methow Valleys this winter. Current snow depths from deer winter range on the Chliwist Wildlife Area in the Okanogan Valley are as follows: fourteen to fifteen inches of snow at the 850 foot elevation (near the Okanogan River) with a slight crust on top; eighteen inches at the 1450 foot level with a variable crust at the bottom six inches; twenty-four inches at the 2100 foot level with a variable crust at the bottom six inches; and thirty inches at the 2600 foot level with a variable crust at the bottom six inches. Deer tracks drop out at approximately 2300 feet. Snow depths are between two and three feet in the Methow Valley bottom.

Temperature: Temperatures have been seasonal, ranging from the mid 20s to the low 30s with a few nights in the teens or the single digits. The forecast calls for a slight chance of measurable precipitation (20-30 percent) throughout Okanogan County with temperatures in the mid teens to low 20s in the Methow Valley, and temperatures in the mid 20s to low 30s in the Okanogan Valley.

Animal Concentrations: Deer appear to be staying below the 2300 foot elevation in the Okanogan Valley, but no large concentrations have been observed.

Animal Condition: Deer appear to be in generally good condition.

Mortality: None mortalities have been documented or reported at this time.

Public Contacts: Omak Hatchery staff has received two calls from the public within the past week inquiring about WDFW feeding deer this winter. One call was from a local citizen that volunteered during the last feeding effort wanting to know if we needed his assistance and the use of his property this year.

Chelan/Douglas County

Weather: To date, winter weather in the Wenatchee District has been characterized by below normal temperatures. Snow accumulations are average to above average in the Cascade foothills and average in Douglas County. Deer are on crucial winter ranges below 3000 feet in elevation in Chelan County, and are avoiding areas of crusted snow over powder snow. Deer distribution in Douglas County is more normal, somewhat influenced by elevation, but more so by availability of winter wheat.

Staff is receiving a few calls from the public, most regarding what to feed deer. There has been no ground swell of widespread concern. Staff has been educating the public on the negative aspects of winter-feeding ungulates and some of that has been well received. In the past, Region 2 staff has fed ungulates under exceptional circumstances (to protect a newly established bighorn reintroduction, and where deer fences have been rebuilt following fire, precluding movement to unburned winter ranges). Based on flights occurring on December 19 and December 20, 2006, wintering deer – even fawns – are still in excellent condition.

REGION 3

Winter Conditions: Winter continues to grip the big game winter ranges in Region 3, with conditions approaching those of 1996-97. Traditional winter ranges have eighteen to thirty-six inches of lightly crusted snow, and the deer are concentrated in individual sage and bitterbrush stands. Most of the animals have already moved to the lowest available ranges where we only have six to twelve inches of snow. Deer conditions appear to be normal, but they've already experienced winter conditions for over 6 weeks, so weight loss is to be expected. Region 3 staff is feeding over 7000 elk per day, and the numbers may still increase over the next few weeks. Peak counts at feed sites usually occur in mid-January.

REGION 4

Winter Conditions: Winter conditions are normal and of no concern in the North Puget Sound at this time. Although a brief snow event occurred in late November, winter ranges below 2000 feet are clear of all snow.

REGION 5

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area

Past Weather: We have had several early storm events resulting in wetter than average conditions and cold weather with low elevation snow at times. In general, conditions have been wetter and colder than average. Snow has been present at times on the wildlife area, which is unusual. Over the past week, snow levels have been as low as 1500 feet, but accumulations have probably been minor. Prior to that, areas at 2500 feet were mostly snow free.

Short-term Forecast: The short-term forecast predicts more moderate conditions after one or two days of near freezing temperatures. The weather should be warmer and a little drier, with snow levels as high as 6500 feet, then possibly lowering to about 2000 feet again. (The wildlife area is below 1000 feet.) In general, conditions are predicted to improve for the near term.

Long-term Forecast: The National Weather Service, as of December 21, 2006, is predicting warmer than average temperatures and average precipitation for the January through March timeframe.

Habitat: The general assessment is that there is still substantial forage available on the site; however, ground vegetation has been covered with snow at times. Use of shrub forage (willow) appears to be greater than normal for this time of year. This typically occurs when ground vegetation is under snow. Otherwise, use of shrubs tends to be heaviest later in the winter. Minor erosion occurred in the November storm. Loss of forage habitat has been minor at this time.

Animal Condition: A subjective visual assessment indicates that elk observed to date appear to be in generally good condition. We have been collecting organ samples from hunter-harvested elk to assess body fat condition. Thus far, the results of the elk organ scoring from the December special permit elk hunts are as follows: 16% (13 Dec); 2% (19 Dec); 2% (19 Dec); 9% (19 Dec); 12% (20 Dec); 13% (22 Dec).

The results are for Ingestal-free body fat by percent using the Kistner Score method by Rachel Cook (2002). Results are reported as "score (kill date)". The method used is specific to adult cows, so samples from yearlings or calves are not included. Many hunters that provided organs did not provide the required pericardium and/or the kidneys. These samples cannot achieve a Kistner score and, therefore, were not included. Four out of the five hunters from the first group in December did not provide a complete set. Five out of the ten hunters in the second group did not provide a complete set.

Animal Concentrations: The first monitoring count of the wildlife area in early December documented 312 elk on the area, but human disturbance was likely a factor. A previous non-formal count in November noted over 400 head. With hunts going on at the current time, we cannot make a good estimate of area use at this time. The next survey, based on monitoring protocol, is scheduled for the first week of January.

Mortality: No mortalities have been documented or reported at this time.

Public Contacts: No calls or other contacts regarding feeding deer were received this week. A news interview with KATU news (Portland) aired last week.

DISTRICT 9 – EAST SIDE

Weather: Snow depth is average for this time of year, with an increasing crust layer developing on snow at the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Temperatures are colder with daytime highs averaging below freezing at mid elevations.

Habitat: Habitat below the 2000-foot level is available.

Winter Severity: Weather conditions are still average for this time of year. The south facing slopes at the Klickitat Wildlife Area are open and accessible. Staff has no concerns at this point about winter conditions.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations have been observed due to inclement conditions.

Animal Condition: Animals appear to be in good condition.

Mortality: No mortalities have been documented or reported at this time.

Public Concerns: No calls or other contacts regarding deer feeding have been received at this point.

REGION 6

Winter Conditions Report: Winter conditions can best be described as normal and of no particular concern in coastal Washington at this time. Although a brief snow event occurred in late November, winter ranges below 2000 feet are clear of all snow.

Conditions remain wet and are creating waterlogged soils, which can lead to hoof rot caused by anaerobic bacteria blooms. It is too early to determine if this will be an issue this year as it was last year.



PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Officers Assist in Evacuation of Mud Slide Victims: Officers responded to Ohop Lake to assist Pierce County in evacuating individuals that were cutoff from the main road by a mudslide. It will most likely be 7 to 10 days before the road is cleared and stabilized. The mudslide destroyed one residence and approximately 50 feet of roadway. WDFW Officers and County Deputies are using the WDFW Access on the lake to provide a mechanism for homeowners to maintain water access.

Sea Lion Trespasses: Officers responded to a report of a sea lion trespassing behind the Raymond High School. The SMD Captain responded with a transportation cage. The animal was over a ten-foot bank, lying on a muddy bench, surrounded by wetlands and brush. About six police officers from the local jurisdictions responded to the scene where they were hoping to observe the 700-pound animal kick the stuffing out of the Game Wardens. To their chagrin, they were instead deputized to assist with the round up. These officers were invaluable as they helped funnel the animal up the embankment and into the trap with the use of tarps and plywood, while it was being herded at the other end. Trying to herd something capable of squishing or eating you while sliding around in the mud is not our idea of fun and involves inherent dangers. But, due to the collective effort of everyone, the capture was successful. The animal was transported away from the area released unharmed (maybe a bruised ego) into the Willapa River.

Bank Robbery Back Up: Pacific County Fish and Wildlife Officers responded to the aid of Long Beach City Police after an armed robbery occurred at a local bank five blocks from the office. One of the suspects used pepper spray to subdue the tellers and then secured them in a storage closet. About \$12,000 was stolen. Fish and Wildlife Officers contained the area and assisted a K-9 unit in tracking bad guys. No arrests have been made yet. The town was pretty shook up over this one.

Near-Miss Citation: Enforcement responded to a call from a Clark County Deputy to assist with a deer carcass which had been dumped in a Walgreen Drug dumpster. Needle containers were found along with addresses in the debris. Following up on the address it was discovered a local Battle Ground school teacher had discarded the remains of his archery deer, but had used plastic bags with remains of his parent's garbage including the bags and containers his dad uses for diabetes. Surprisingly, the deer tag was back in the son's wallet with very faint indications it had been used with mere slight pen pokes on the dates. A warning was issued on this very near-miss violation for improper notching, and a citation for litter over one cubic foot was given with Walgreen's support.

Waterfowl Emphasis: Officers coordinated and participated in the 2006 Tri-Cities joint waterfowl emphasis. A total of 22 officers, 16 WDFW and 6 USFWS, participated in the emphasis. The patrol area included the lower Columbia Basin and the Snake River from the Tri-Cities to Clarkston. Although waterfowl activity was lower than normal due to blue bird weather, the Officers contacted numerous hunters and anglers. The patrols concentrated on both public and private lands, and included several boat patrols. Resulting violations included: hunt closed hours, possession of lead shot, over limits, no license/ fed stamps, unplugged shotgun, fish closed season, closed season swan and warrant arrests. Thanks to all the officers involved!

Oregon Man Arrested for Numerous Wildlife Violations: WDFW Officers have been investigating a southern Oregon man who has been big game hunting in the Columbia County area with a resident Washington license. He had provided a local store with archery pictures of large mule deer bucks, a trophy blacktail buck, and a 6x6 bull. Officers obtained the pictures and believed the bucks were killed in eastern Oregon due to their size. It appeared the suspect was killing the permit only bucks and covering them with Washington tags. The suspect, a convicted felon, was promoting himself as a big game guide. The Officers located the man hunting again in the area for the opening of late archery season, so they obtained a search warrant for his vehicle expecting to find the license documents and additional photos. They located the man and searched his vehicle. The license documents, including un-validated deer and turkey tags, Washington and Oregon resident licenses, additional photos, and a .270 rifle were found. A search warrant was obtained for the man's residence. WDFW Officers and four Oregon State Police (OSP) F&W Troopers served the warrant at the suspect's residence. All of the racks were still at the residence including numerous additional field photos that confirmed the bucks were killed on eastern Oregon winter range. The bull killed in Washington was recovered as well, and other photos and video of illegally taken turkey and antelope were found. OSP seized a freezer full of elk meat and additional firearms illegally possessed by the suspect. An OSP SIU Detective reported nine headless bucks were found on the winter range last year. Evidence found at those scenes point toward the same suspect. Other evidence found at the warrant service opened investigations into two friends of the suspect for similar violations and theft for OSP.



Far Left, Back Row: WDFW Officer Ryan John – Middle Back Row: WDFW Officer Jim Nelson
All others are Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Officers

Tribal Elk Poaching: Enforcement Officers responded to two separate calls for service involving Yakama Tribal members. Members were trespassing on private property to access open and unclaimed land. One tribal member killed a 5-point bull on the West Valley feed lot. The Yakama Tribe was contacted and responded to the scene. Tribal police seized the elk and guns.

Copper Thieves Add to Power Outage Misery: Officer noticed a Ford Ranger pick-up parked on the shoulder of High Bridge Road in Snohomish County. A male and female were near some downed power-lines from the recent windstorm and coils of wire were in the back of the truck. While Officers began to investigate, the two subjects ran back to the truck and took off in the opposite direction. Officers nearly caught up to them when they took a dead-end, side road and he drove by. Before he could turn around and continue, they took off heading south and after a short chase, Officer Stevens lost them. Things have been bad enough with the power outages, but the drug-driven need to pilfer copper wire from the downed power lines when so many are without the bare necessities is truly a crime. Officers will continue to be on the lookout for these activities.

Officers Put Muscle Behind Mussel Enforcement: The new lead of the Enforcement Program's newly formed Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) position received information from Olympia staff that a boat contaminated with Zebra mussels was en route from California. After much investigation, he was able to determine that a Canadian citizen on Vancouver Island bought the 25-foot boat in Ohio. Ohio is a state on the list of "hot states" for the infestation of Zebra mussels. Since 1986, the states bordering the Mississippi River have spent \$138 Billion on fighting the Zebra mussel war. The boat in question was moved from Ohio to California and then to Washington. The California Department of Agriculture conducted an inspection and found Zebra mussels. They then let the boat pass through to Washington. They also forwarded very spotty information to WDFW. The boat was located and directed to the Washington State Patrol office in Marysville. Our Officers spent 2 hours on de-contamination. Over 50 Zebra mussels were found on the boat. Following the inspection, a written warning was given to the boat owner for transporting AIS through Washington. The boat owner was very cooperative and praised the efforts of our Officers to ensure no Zebra mussels survived. The potential negative economic impacts from the introduction of this species to the waters of Washington are devastating.

Snowmobiles Aid in Apprehension: Officer was called out by Okanogan County Sheriff's Office (OKSO) dispatch with a report of shots fired, vehicle prowl, and theft from Conconully. Deputies had chased a vehicle up Tunk Valley near Crawfish Lake. County units were stuck in the snow and were requesting snowmobile support. Officer had advised dispatch that we had the snowmobiles. Officers arrived and Tribal Police had taken three subjects into custody. Officer shuttled Officers back and forth on the snowmobile from the location of the stuck suspect vehicle to the location of the apprehension. Officers and Deputies learned that a fourth subject was also present and had not been located. An OKSO Sergeant then operated the second WDFW snowmobile and along with WDFW Officers they tracked the suspect who was on foot for 6.8 miles cornering him with a Tribal unit at Moses Meadows and Hayden Creek road. The suspect would not have been tracked, and could never have been located that night without the snowmobiles. Charges of burglary, possession of stolen property, theft, and vehicle prowl were filed against the four suspects.

Elk Massacre: Officers responded to a possible elk poaching along the A-Road near Forks. Arriving at the scene, Fairbanks found six elk (four cows and two calves) that had been shot and left to rot. The state of decomposition indicated that they might have been killed the day before. One of the calves was still alive, but was mortally wounded, apparently suffering for a very long time. Officers dispatched the animal. Multiple shell casings at the scene indicate a possible assault rifle (SKS?) was used for the massacre. Officers will continue the investigation.

Watchable Wildlife: Watchable Wildlife staff is developing a Bald Eagle Festival display focusing on the promotion of the Bald Eagle specialty plate and the Bald Eagle WildWatchCams. The Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival (February 3- 4) features hundreds of wintering bald eagles and reaches thousands of visitors desiring to see and learn about this fascinating raptor. The Grand Coulee Bald Eagle Festival (February 16-17) offers opportunities to see a few hundred bald eagles against the colorful rocks, canyons, and frozen waterfalls of Central Washington. Each festival has unique activities, speakers, and events. Additional information about the bald eagle festivals can be found at <http://www.eaglefestival.com> or <http://www.skagiteagle.org>.

Skagit Basin Outreach and Education: TAPPS Biologist helped the Skagit Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group (SRFEG) plan a tour of enhancement project sites for a public outreach program and subsequently lead that tour December 2, 2006. Response was excellent, aided by many spawning chum that were easily visible and good weather. The SRFEG will provide additional educational opportunities for citizens, particularly with some later riparian revegetation efforts. This program was aimed at citizens of the upper Skagit Basin and modeled after a similar series of seminars for the lower Skagit public last year.

2007 Recreation License Sales: Recreation Licenses for 2007 went on sale Dec 5, 2006. This is the first time that WDFW Licensing Division has developed and implemented the license catalog for the next license year in real-time. Previously introducing a new recreation license catalog required several months of programming and planning with our previous vendor. The new catalog feature allows Licensing to immediately copy, modify, or add any recreation license privilege available for sale for the upcoming season. Adding this feature allow Dealers to sell both 2006 and 2007 license privileges for the next several months. Approximately \$100,000 in 2007 recreation license sales is purchased each year for gifts during the holiday season.

2007 Pre-Season Forecasts: Technical staff from WDFW, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Tribe's, have all agreed to pre-season Salmon runs returning to the Columbia River.

2007 Columbia River Mouth Forecasts

	2007 Forecast	2006 Return	Distribution
Upriver Spring Chinook	78,500	132,100	Destined for above Bonneville Dam
Summer Chinook	45,600	76,200	Destined for above Priest Rapids Dam
Sockeye	27,300	37,100	Destined for Wenatchee, Okanogan, Snake Rivers
Wild Winter Steelhead	16,200	16,000	Destined for tributaries mostly below Bonneville Dam

FUNDING GOAL:

ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WASHINGTON STATE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC

Pacific Coast Fishery Data Committee (PCFDC): The PCFDC budget subcommittee also reviewed this year's Pacific Fishery Information Network (PacFIN) budget. While final budget figures will not be available until at least January, preliminary indications are that the grant for 2007 will be just slightly above the initial grant from last year. Since PacFIN received a supplemental budget of \$90,000 last year that is not expected for this year, and due to cost-of-living adjustments, we are currently under-funded to provide the current level of service in agency PacFIN supported tasks. (See *Competence Goal*, page 20, for further information on PCFDC)

Revised Sherman Creek Timber Thinning Prescription: Doug Kuehn updated the thinning prescription for the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. This information will now be used by an appraiser to estimate the timber volume and value by species and size class, and will then be compared with the appraised value of perpetual timber rights (PTR's) on Oak Creek. WDFW is hoping to trade a one-time harvest of timber on Sherman Creek for PTR's held by Western Pacific Timber on 23,000 acres of WDFW land in Yakima County.

Washington Chapter of Society for Range Management (SRM) Meeting: Edd Bracken and Mel Asher attended the fall meeting of the Washington chapter of the Society for Range Management (SRM) to discuss the livestock-grazing pilot project program among WDFW, the Washington Cattlemen's Association, and the Cattle Producers of Washington. Members were especially interested in the monitoring methods that we used. The chapter has planned a field trip next spring to see how the monitoring transects are set up and read. Mel Asher was elected Chapter President for 2007.

COMPETENCE GOAL:

IMPLEMENT PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE SOUND AND PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS, CULTIVATE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND AGENCY CREDIBILITY

Emergency bank stabilization on the Sauk River near Darrington: WDFW Habitat and Engineering staff met with Snohomish County, U.S. Forest Service, and private landowners associated with the River Resource Trust to discuss the permit requirements for bank protection work on the Sauk River near Darrington. Snohomish County permit fees and environmental review (SEPA) will be waived for projects that are to repair property damaged during the early November flooding. All permits associated with bank protection on a Wild and Scenic River must still be obtained. The landowners intend to have a project professionally designed (based on the WDFW guidance manual, ISPG) that may include between 6 and 15 contiguous lots. WDFW staff will continue to work with the landowners to facilitate the design and permitting process.

Emergency Bank Stabilization on the Skykomish River: WDFW Habitat and Engineering staff along with State Representative Pearson and Snohomish County staff met with a group of citizens on the Skykomish River east of Goldbar to review severe bank erosion as a result of the early November floods. Various options for bank stabilization using bioengineering were discussed. The citizens are looking for available funds to help defray the cost of bank stabilization. WDFW Habitat staff will be available for technical review and permitting.

Hydraulic Project Management System Update: In mid-January, a new version of the Hydraulic Project Management System (HPMS) computer application will go into production. The new version 4.0 includes a new module to support and store information on project site visits made by Habitat Biologists. The new release also includes storage of letters in the database, a more efficient user interface, and better HPA data search tools.

New Phone Systems: Two regional offices (Regions 4 and 5) are receiving new phone systems. The Region 5 system was installed in November and Region 4 will be completed by January 15. The new systems replace obsolete equipment and operate on the computer network. The Region 1 office also operates the same type of phone system. The new technology integrates data and voice networks, is easier to manage, and can route phone calls between these offices over the computer network saving call costs.

FEMA Update: We have received no additional damage reports since WDFW's Business Services Director sent out an email request on October 19, 2006. However, WDFW programs have until January 4, 2007 to respond. The declared counties included: Chelan, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, King, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, and Wahkiakum. We have documented damage in all counties except Lewis County. Glenn will be attending a briefing from Emergency Management and FEMA, held in Pierce Co. on January 5, 2007. The briefing will outline how we are to fill out the documents describing the damage we experienced during the flooding in November. All requests for funding are due to Emergency Management and FEMA by February 2, 2007.

Pacific Coast Fishery Data Committee (PDFDC): IRM, Fish Program Marine Science, and Information Systems staffs attended the annual PCFDC meeting hosted by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in Portland. The meeting provides a forum for the three coastal states and Alaska to review their fishery data programs, make necessary corrections to data collection and reporting protocols, and pursue efficiencies in collecting fishery information to feed the Pacific Fishery Information Network (PacFIN). Among the issues addressed at this year's meeting were changes to the protocol for identifying nominal species catch in PacFIN (i.e., reported species catch categories that may contain some portion of other species), identifying the procedure to integrate research catch into PacFIN so that inappropriate catch discard penalties are not applied, and revising some sampling protocols for collecting and processing biological information collected from commercial catches.

Fir Island Snow Goose Update: Many Officers statewide continue to work the Fir Island snow goose season. Wet, windy weather increased hunter success and the number of hunters. Several of the most dissatisfied residents with hunter problems from past seasons were consulted and all praised the WDFW for the enforcement patrols and the quality-hunting program.

Ocean Policy Working Group: IRM staff attended a meeting of the Ocean Policy Working Group in late November to finalize the ocean policy recommendations and drafting of the final report. There were substantive comments received from members of the public on the draft report and recommendations. The Working Group reviewed these comments and discussed whether any modifications were needed. All of the written comments will be appended to the final report, which will be available by the end of December.

The proposed governance structure was revised in response to recommendations to add seats for the coastal tribes and counties. The team composition will be similar to the current working group; that is, representatives from key state agencies such as Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Natural Resources, and Community, Trade and Economic Development. Coordination of and staff support for the team will be the responsibility of the Department of Ecology, with additional seats for the coastal tribes and counties. Meetings will be open to the public and constituents could participate in team meetings in an advisory capacity.

Invasive Species Council: IRM is representing WDFW on the Washington Invasive Species Council. The Council was created by the Legislature in 2006 and is being convened by the Governor's Office. The Council's charge is to develop a statewide strategic plan that addresses prevention, detection, and response to the increasing number of harmful plant and animal species invading our state, resulting in damage to the environment and causing economic hardship. The Council's first meeting was held November 28, 2006. IRM, the Fish Program's Aquatic Nuisance Species staff, and the Wildlife Program's Wildlife Areas staff are coordinating WDFW's activities via the formation of an internal cross-program Invasive Species Team.

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization and the Pacific Council: Congress reauthorized the Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act in mid-December. The Act has been revised to include language specific to the Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding the creation of a limited access privilege program (or rationalization program) for the trawl fishery. Among other things, the Act requires that the Pacific Council consider the development of "regional fishery associations" and/or other cooperative-type programs. The National Marine Fisheries Service is undergoing a comprehensive review of the Act and plans to provide guidance to the Pacific Council relative to meeting the requirements of the new Act at the Council's March 2007 meeting.

Pacific Fishery Management Council Allocation Committee: IRM staff attended the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Allocation Committee meeting in mid-December in Portland. The purpose of the meeting was to develop recommendations to refine the range of trawl rationalization program alternatives for consideration by the Council. In March, the Council will receive reports from the Groundfish Management Team and Trawl Individual Quota Committee on the refined list of alternatives and approve a range for analysis and public review. These alternatives will be analyzed in a draft Environmental Impact Statement and would include an amendment to the Council's Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The primary issues under discussion include: 1) whether to provide an initial allocation of quota to processors as well as harvesters and, if so, what amount); 2) how to treat overfished species under a trawl rationalization program – assigning individual quotas vs. pooling quotas at a sector level, having hard bycatch “caps” vs. more flexible harvest guidelines, etc.; and 3) providing for the formation of cooperative-style management between harvesters and processors for different trawl sectors. The Allocation Committee will have another meeting in May to continue its work on the Intersector Allocation alternatives, which will form the basis for the trawl rationalization program.

Tribal Hunting Workshop: The Director's Office and IRM hosted a two-day workshop for the Senior Management Team to discuss tribal hunting issues. The goals of the workshop were: to identify and clarify tribal hunting issues; to develop a consistent approach to responding to existing and emerging tribal hunting issues; and to define a process for engaging these issues. The Director's Office and IRM will be drafting operational guidelines for tribal hunting. These guidelines will frame what is needed in implementing Regional State-Tribal Management Plans.

Transfers of Oyster Shell: The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Tiburon, CA, in the San Francisco Bay area, contacted the department to get information on the permitting system that WDFW uses for the transfer of oyster shell (cultch). While San Francisco Bay does not have shellfish aquaculture industry to speak of, it does have parties interested in transferring large quantities of oyster shell into the bay for Olympia oyster restoration. WDFW staff provided the rules that govern the transfer of oyster shell along with many examples of permits and their conditions employed to prevent the introduction and spread of unwanted organisms. SERC staff stated that Washington State serves as the model for proactive management in the control of shellfish diseases and pests.

Purse Seiners Assist in Chum Spawning at Minter Creek: Seven members from the Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association, (PSVOA), assisted in chum spawning at the Minter Creek Hatchery on Tuesday, November 28, 2006. In frigid weather conditions, the local fishermen volunteered their services in helping to take over 1.6 million eggs. The total egg take for the Minter Creek Chum Program is 4.4 million, with 2 million eyed eggs going to area cooperative projects managed by many of the PSVOA members.

It was an outstanding day as the Purse Seiners contributed in all areas of spawning activities. The partnership began in 2003 when the PSVOA provided funding and volunteer time to continue the chum program at Minter Creek.

SCIENCE GOAL:

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOUND AND OBJECTIVE SCIENCE TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Amon Creek (WRIA 37): Reporters interviewed staff regarding the recent success story of adult coho returns in Amon Creek, a small independent tributary to the Columbia between Richland and Kennewick, immediately downstream of the Yakima River mouth. An article was published in various eastern Washington newspapers. A documentary movie, *Arid Lands*, was presented at a film festival in Nevada recently. In the film, Water Team staff Paul LaRiviere represented local interests in flow restoration and salmon recovery efforts in Amon Creek. The entire film was about how the Tri-Cities needs and utilizes water.

WRIA 32/35 Instream Flows: Staff attended WRIA 35 (Middle Snake River tributaries) and 32 (Walla Walla River basin) Planning Unit meetings to discuss instream flows. WRIA 32 instream negotiations have hit a major milestone. The Department of Ecology has closed the rule to changes and comments in order to file the CR-102 on January 24, 2007, to begin the formal rule-making process. WDFW has worked with the planning unit since its inception more than five years ago. Though the Department does have some issues with the current rule (e.g., reaches downstream of management points; allowing of withdrawals as late as May 31 on the Walla Walla for “environmental enhancement projects”), most of our concerns have been addressed through negotiation and we commend the Planning Unit for the work they have done and the final product they have submitted. We will continue to try to have our final concerns addressed as we move into the formal rule-making process.

Domestic and Wild Sheep Don’t Mix: Wildlife Biologist Beau Patterson received information of a Mouflon sheep at a residence in the area of Ohme Gardens on the north end of Wenatchee. This area is frequented by a resident herd of Bighorn sheep, and the potential of the transmission of disease from the Mouflon to the wild sheep was a concern. Enforcement and Biologist Patterson met with the homeowners and provided a packet of information and regulations. The homeowners recently moved to Chelan County from the west side and were very concerned about the welfare of the resident wild sheep. They agreed to get rid of the deleterious wildlife and Biologist Patterson is currently attempting to locate a suitable and lawful location to transfer the domestic sheep.

EMPLOYEE GOAL:

CREATE AN AGENCY ENVIRONMENT THAT NURTURES PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY, ENTHUSIASM, AND DEDICATION IN ORDER TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN A WORKFORCE THAT CAN SUCCESSFULLY CARRY OUT THE MANDATE OF THE AGENCY.

Lands Division Winter Workshop: Lands Division staff from around the state spent the better part of the week at the winter workshop in Ellensburg. Agenda items included presentations on global warming implications for fish and wildlife, the 2007-09 budget outlook, the wildlife area habitat conservation plan, mapping, research on fish and wildlife lands, public access, work plans for 2007, Lands Division awards, acquisition program grants, proposed land use rules and regulations, etc.

New Rules Coordinator: On December 1, 2006 Enforcement welcomed Lori Preuss to the WDFW as the Criminal Justice Liaison and Administrative Regulations Coordinator for the Department. Lori received her J.D. from Gonzaga University School of Law, and her M.A. in English – Technical and Professional Writing – and B.A. in English Education from Eastern Washington University. In the past four years, she has served as a deputy prosecuting attorney for the San Juan and Okanogan county prosecuting attorney's offices, working closely with WDFW. Lori is passionate about preserving, protecting, and perpetuating Washington's marine and wildlife resources and is a valuable addition to join our team.

Loss of Game Protector: A WDFW Sergeant represented the agency at the funeral of a legend in northwestern Washington on Sunday. Ole C. Eide was hired in 1934 as a Game Protector for the newly formed Department of Game. He was assigned to Snohomish, Skagit, and Island counties. He retired as a Regional Supervisor in 1969. Ole died on Saturday, November 25 in Mt. Vernon. His 35-year career touched the lives of thousands of people. He was both a mentor and a role model for many officers who followed in his footsteps. Ole was 98 years old. He will be greatly missed.